

Child Labor in Indiana Timeline, September 1807—February 1915

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Compiled by Stephen J. Fletcher, Curator, Visual Collections, Indiana Historical Society

1807

September Indiana territorial legislature passes law for the relief of the poor that included provision for county common pleas courts to appoint two overseers in every township who, by formal consent of two county justices of the peace, could "put out as apprentices, all such poor children, whose parents are dead, or shall be . . . found unable to maintain them, males till the age of twenty-one, and females till the age of eighteen years."

1819

July German Ferdinand Ernst, visiting New Harmony while traveling to Illinois with hopes of establishing a colony, writes, "We first went to the wool factory. A steam engine of 30 horse power cards, combs, and cleans the wool, delivers small hanks of it which are then spun on a spinning machine very evenly and fast . . . by a girl and four children."

1825

Spring Harmony, Indiana purchased by Robert Owen from George Rapp

1826

April 19 Writing in the *New Harmony Gazette*, "A Friendly Spectator" suggests that "all children under eleven years of age should be busied alone with their education; at eleven the child should perform one-seventh of a day's work; at twelve, two sevenths, and so on until at seventeen the full amount should be demanded from all." [Lockwood, George B. *The New Harmony Movement*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1905, p. 119.]

1867

March Indiana General Assembly passes a law that prohibits children under the age of sixteen from working in cotton or woolen factories more than ten hours in any day.

1869

April Indiana House of Representative considers a bill to regulate the employment of children under sixteen years old in the cotton and woolen mills unless they have attended school at least twelve weeks during the twelve preceding months. The bill also would have prohibited children from working more than eleven hours in one day, but was amended to lower the limit to ten hours. After another amendment was proposed to include "every other shop, factory or place where such minors are employed," the bill was indefinitely postponed.

1874

September 26 Lewis Hine, noted photographer who would document child labor throughout the United States, born in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

1879

March An act concerning coal mining passed in Indiana legislature that includes prohibition of boys under fourteen from working in mines.

1881 April	<p>Indiana General Assembly passes Revised Statutes act that includes section that upholds the prohibition of children under eighteen from working in a cotton or woolen mill more than ten hours a day. The law was not enacted.</p> <p>American Federation of Labor, during its first convention, adopts a resolution soliciting states to ban all gainful employment of children.</p>
1885 April	Legislation enacted prohibiting children under twelve from working in manufacture of iron, steel, nails, metals, machinery, or tobacco; and from working more than ten hours per day.
1889	Indiana legislature enacts broad child labor law that prohibits children under twelve from rope or wire walking, performing as an acrobat, gymnast, contortionist, or rider; any obscene or indecent or illegal exhibition or vocation; or any vocation injurious to health or dangerous to limb; prostitution; or underground works or mines. Children under fifteen may not sing, dance, act, or exhibit in dance houses or places selling liquor. Children under eighteen are not permitted to sing, play a musical instrument, or beg in the streets.
1891	Revision of law regulating coal mine maintains ban on males under fourteen [but conflicts with 1889 law], and adds a requirement for a parental affidavit verifying age. Females are specifically forbidden from working in mines.
1893	1885 act is amended, raising age prohibited from employment from twelve to fourteen.
1894	Indiana's People's Party platform includes plank for a child labor law.
1897 March 2	<p>"An act to regulate the employment of woman and children" approved. The act stipulates, "That no person under sixteen years of age and no woman under eighteen years of age, employed in any manufacturing establishment (defined in section 18 as "any mill, factory or workshop where ten or more persons are employed at labor") shall be required to work therein more than sixty hours in any one week, nor more than ten hours in one day," with some exceptions. Law also requires parental affidavit, and ability to read and write. Work in tenement houses, another area of child labor abuse, is banned without permit. This law also enables the appointment of a factory inspector and one assistant to enforce state labor laws</p> <p>Compulsory education law passed in Indiana legislature requiring children ages eight to fourteen to attend school at least twelve consecutive weeks</p>
1899	A law extending 1897 act is passed. Mercantile establishments as well as laundries, renovating works, bakeries and printing offices are added to businesses that require sixty-hour workweek limit; these plus mines and quarries are added to the age fourteen regulation. The law also creates the Department of Factory Inspection, with Chief Inspector and two Deputy Inspectors.

1900	United States census reveals 1,700,00 children employed—18% of all children between ages ten and fifteen. Many believe this figure did not accurately reflect problem because children under ten were not counted, nor were those who worked less than half time
	Hine attends University of Chicago to prepare for teaching career.
1901	Hine leaves Chicago to teach at Felix Adler's Ethical Culture School in New York City; continues studies at Columbia and New York universities.
	Alabama Child Labor Committee, the first of its kind, formed by Edgar Gardner Murphy. Murphy smuggles camera inside textile mills to document conditions and publishes photographs in pamphlet, <i>Pictures from the Mills</i>
1902	New York Child labor Committee formed, headed by Robert Hunter of Terre Haute.
1903	Hine first use of a camera, recording activities at the Ethical Culture School.
1904	Hine begins photographing immigrants at Ellis Island
April	National Child Labor Committee formed with Felix Adler as president and Samuel McCune Lindsay as General Secretary.
October	Lindsay calls for a general investigation of child labor in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, "with the chief interest centered upon the conditions found in the glass industry."
Autumn	Children's Aid Society organized in Indianapolis
December	Harriet Van Der Vaart, General Secretary of the Illinois branch of the Consumers League conducts investigations in Illinois and Indiana, including Terre Haute, Indianapolis, Muncie, Marion, and Gas City.
1905	
February	Children's Aid Society incorporated.
March 10	"An act concerning public offenses" contains section prohibiting manufacturers from employing children under fourteen years of age for more than eight hours a day.
May	Ohio form child labor committees.
September	Wisconsin Child Labor Committee established.
1906	
December	Albert Beveridge, United States Senator from Indiana, introduces first national child labor bill in Senate.
1907	
July	Beveridge speaks on child labor at National Conference of Charities and Corrections "to such purpose that the end of his collar flew out at his peroration."

1908

- January 25 First National Child Labor Day observed.
- February Through a grant from the Russell Sage Foundation, the NCLC establishes its Ohio Valley States office in Cincinnati and appoints Edward N. Clopper as regional secretary.
- June Clopper meets with Children's Aid Association, which forms a special child labor committee. Committee begins process of planning for a state committee that would cooperate with the NCLC.
- August Hine goes to Cincinnati and meets Clopper, photographing street trades for approximately two weeks. Clopper reports next on itinerary are West Virginia mining region and several industrial towns; dates in captions, however, suggest they went to Indianapolis and vicinity (probably Anderson) next.
- September Children's Aid Association child labor committee has appointed five of a desired seven members.
- Clopper returns in mid-September to meet with Children Aid Association.
- October Hine returns with Clopper to West Virginia and photographs in Evansville, Terre Haute, Hammond, Marion, Muncie, Peru, South Bend.
- November West Virginia Child Labor Committee formed.
- December Clopper reports, "It has been more difficult to arouse interest in Indiana than West Virginia, because of the fact that while in West Virginia most of the people realize the conditions are not good, in Indiana it is almost impossible to persuade anyone that child labor actually exists there."

1909

- February 10 NCLC general Secretary Owen R. Lovejoy and Clopper speak at annual meeting of the Children's Aid Association. Lovejoy spoke on child labor conditions in Indiana and Clopper described stereopticon views (lantern slides) made by Hine from his negatives.
- February 25 Clopper reports to NCLC, "The people of Indiana are slow to take hold of any movement, but when they do take hold they carry it through with determination. In this work it is simply a matter of keeping up the agitation until the people take hold of the movement. I have held child labor meetings in several of the principal towns of the state, but have succeeded in awakening only a passive interest. The Labor Unions are practically the only ones who have co-operated."
- June Indiana Child Labor Committee organized under the leadership of Professor Ulysses S. Weatherly, chairman of the Sociology Department at Indiana University.
- October Indiana Child Labor Committee holds first annual meeting in Columbus during State Conference of Charities.

1915

February

Indiana Child Welfare Exposition held in Indianapolis, which includes exhibit demonstrating the need for more stringent child labor, workman's compensation, and industrial inspection laws.